

## CHAPTER 354

## PLATTING — DIVISION AND SUBDIVISION OF LAND

Referred to in [§331.602](#), [§441.72](#), [§543C.1](#), [§592.3](#), [§714.16](#)

Standards for land surveys and plats, see also chapter 355

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**354.1 Statement of purpose.**

It is the purpose of [this chapter](#) to provide for a balance between the review and regulation authority of governmental agencies concerning the division and subdivision of land and the rights of landowners. It is therefore determined to be in the public interest:

1. To provide for accurate, clear, and concise legal descriptions of real estate in order to prevent, wherever possible, land boundary disputes or real estate title problems.

2. To provide for a balance between the land use rights of individual landowners and the economic, social, and environmental concerns of the public when a city or county is developing or enforcing land use regulations.

3. To provide for statewide, uniform procedures and standards for the platting of land while allowing the widest possible latitude for cities and counties to establish and enforce ordinances regulating the division and use of land, within the scope of, but not limited to, [chapters 331, 335, 364, 414, and this chapter](#). All documents presented for recording pursuant to [this chapter](#) shall comply with [section 331.606B](#).

4. To encourage orderly community development and provide for the regulation and control of the extension of public improvements, public services, and utilities, the improvement of land, and the design of subdivisions, consistent with an approved comprehensive plan or other specific community plans, if any.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §15](#)

[C91, §409A.1](#)

[C93, §354.1](#)

[2001 Acts, ch 44, §12; 2005 Acts, ch 19, §46](#)

**354.2 Definitions.**

As used by [this chapter](#), unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

1. "Acquisition plat" means the graphical representation of the division of land or rights in land, created as the result of a conveyance or condemnation for right-of-way purposes by an agency of the government or other persons having the power of eminent domain.

2. "Aliquot part" means a fractional part of a section within the United States public land survey system. Only the fractional parts one-half, one-quarter, one-half of one-quarter, or one-quarter of one-quarter shall be considered an aliquot part of a section.

3. “Auditor’s plat” means a subdivision plat required by either the auditor or the assessor, prepared by a surveyor under the direction of the auditor.

4. “Book”, “list”, “record”, or “schedule” kept by a county auditor, assessor, treasurer, recorder, sheriff, or other county officer means the county system as defined in [section 445.1](#).

5. “Conveyance” means an instrument filed with a recorder as evidence of the transfer of title to land, including any form of deed or contract.

6. “Division” means dividing a tract or parcel of land into two parcels of land by conveyance or for tax purposes. The conveyance of an easement, other than a public highway easement, shall not be considered a division for the purpose of [this chapter](#).

7. “Forty-acre aliquot part” means one-quarter of one-quarter of a section.

8. “Governing body” means a city council or the board of supervisors, within whose jurisdiction the land is located, which has adopted ordinances regulating the division of land.

9. “Government lot” means a tract, within a section, which is normally described by a lot number as represented and identified on the township plat of the United States public land survey system.

10. “Lot” means a tract of land represented and identified by number or letter designation on an official plat.

11. “Metes and bounds description” means a description of land that uses distances and angles, uses distances and bearings, or describes the boundaries of the parcel by reference to physical features of the land.

12. “Official plat” means either an auditor’s plat or a subdivision plat that meets the requirements of [this chapter](#) and has been filed for record in the offices of the recorder, auditor, and assessor.

13. “Parcel” means a part of a tract of land.

14. “Permanent real estate index number” means a unique number or combination of numbers assigned to a parcel of land pursuant to [section 441.29](#).

15. “Plat of survey” means the graphical representation of a survey of one or more parcels of land, including a complete and accurate description of each parcel within the plat, prepared by a licensed professional land surveyor.

16. “Proprietor” means a person who has a recorded interest in land, including a person selling or buying land pursuant to a contract, but excluding persons holding a mortgage, easement, or lien interest.

17. “Subdivision” means a tract of land divided into three or more lots.

18. “Subdivision plat” means the graphical representation of the subdivision of land, prepared by a licensed professional land surveyor, having a number or letter designation for each lot within the plat and a succinct name or title that is unique for the county where the land is located.

19. “Surveyor” means a licensed professional land surveyor who engages in the practice of land surveying pursuant to [chapter 542B](#).

20. “Tract” means an aliquot part of a section, a lot within an official plat, or a government lot.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §16](#)

[C91, §409A.2](#)

[C93, §354.2](#)

[2000 Acts, ch 1148, §1](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1119, §200, 201](#); [2012 Acts, ch 1009, §1](#)

Referred to in [§354.4A, §542B.2](#)

### **354.3 Covenant of warranty.**

The duty to file for record a plat as provided in [sections 354.4](#) and [354.6](#) attaches as a covenant of warranty in all conveyances by a grantor who divides land against all assessments, costs, and damages paid, lost, or incurred by a grantee or person claiming under a grantee, in consequence of the omission on the part of the grantor to file the plat. A conveyance of land is deemed to be a warranty that the description contained in the conveyance is sufficiently certain and accurate for the purposes of assessment, taxation, and entry on the transfer books and plat books required to be kept by the auditor. The description contained in a conveyance shall be sufficiently certain and accurate for assessment and

taxation purposes if it provides sufficient information to allow all the boundaries to be accurately determined and does not overlap with or create a gap between adjoining land descriptions.

A recorded conveyance in violation of [this chapter](#) may be entered on the transfer books of the auditor's office. The auditor shall notify the grantor and the grantee that the conveyance is in violation of [this chapter](#) and demand compliance as provided for in [section 354.13](#).

90 Acts, ch 1236, §17

C91, §409A.3

C93, §354.3

Referred to in [§354.13](#)

#### **354.4 Divisions requiring a plat of survey or acquisition plat.**

1. The grantor of land which has been divided using a metes and bounds description shall have a plat of survey made of the division, except as provided for in [subsection 3](#). The grantor or the surveyor shall contact the county auditor who, for the purpose of assessment and taxation, shall review the division to determine whether the survey shall include only the parcel being conveyed or both the parcel being conveyed and the remaining parcel. The plat of survey shall be prepared in compliance with [chapter 355](#) and shall be recorded. The plat shall be clearly marked by the surveyor as a plat of survey and shall include the following information for each parcel included in the survey:

- a. A parcel letter or number designation approved by the auditor.
- b. The names of the proprietors.
- c. An accurate description of each parcel.
- d. The total acreage of each parcel.
- e. The acreage of any portion lying within a public right-of-way.

2. The auditor shall note a permanent real estate index number upon each parcel shown on a plat of survey according to [section 441.29](#) for real estate tax administration purposes. The surveyor shall not assign parcel letters or prepare a metes and bounds description for any parcel shown on a plat of survey unless the parcel was surveyed by the surveyor in compliance with [chapter 355](#). Parcels within a plat of survey prepared pursuant to [this section](#) are subject to the regulations and ordinances of the governing body.

3. When land or rights in land are divided for right-of-way purposes by an agency of the government or other persons having the power of eminent domain and the description of the land or rights acquired is a metes and bounds description then an acquisition plat shall be made and attached to the description when the acquisition instrument is recorded. Acquisition plats shall be clearly marked as an acquisition plat and shall conform to the following:

- a. Acquisition plats shall not be required to conform to the provisions of [chapter 355](#).
- b. The information shown on the plat shall be developed from instruments of record together with information developed by field measurements. The unadjusted error of field measurements shall not be greater than one in five thousand.
- c. The plat shall be signed and dated by a surveyor, bear the surveyor's Iowa license number and legible seal, and shall show a north arrow and bar scale.
- d. The original drawing shall remain the property of the surveyor or the surveyor's agency and shall not be less than eight and one-half by eleven inches in size.
- e. If the right-of-way on an acquisition plat is a portion of lots within an official plat, reference shall be made to both the lots and plat name. If the right-of-way acquisition plat is not within an official plat, reference shall be made to the government lot or quarter-quarter section and to the section, township, range, and county.
- f. The plat shall indicate whether the monuments shown are existing monuments or monuments to be established. Monuments shall be established as necessary to construct or maintain the right-of-way project.

g. The acquisition plat shall identify the project for which the right-of-way was acquired and a parcel designation shall be assigned to each right-of-way parcel.

4. The acreage shown for each parcel included in a plat of survey or acquisition plat shall be to the nearest one-hundredth acre. If a parcel described as part of the United States

public land survey system and not entirely within an official plat, lies within more than one forty-acre aliquot part of a section, the acreage shall be shown only for assessment and taxation purposes for each portion of the parcel that lies within each forty-acre aliquot part. The surveyor shall not be required to establish the location of the forty-acre aliquot line by survey but is required to use reasonable assumptions in determining its approximate location for assessment and taxation purposes.

5. Governmental agencies shall not be required to survey a remaining parcel when land is divided for right-of-way purposes and shall not be required to contact the auditor for approval of parcel designations shown on an acquisition plat.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §18](#)

C91, §409A.4

[91 Acts, ch 191, §15](#)

C93, §354.4

[2005 Acts, ch 19, §47](#); [2012 Acts, ch 1009, §2](#)

Referred to in [§354.3, §354.13](#)

#### **354.4A Entry upon land for survey purposes.**

1. *a.* A land surveyor may enter public or private land or water in the state only to occupy, locate, relocate, install, or replace survey monuments, to locate boundaries, rights-of-way, and easements, to determine geodetic positions, and to make surveys and maps and may carry with them their customary equipment and vehicles. A surveyor may not enter buildings or other structures located on the land. Entry under the right granted in [this section](#) shall not constitute trespass, and land surveyors shall not be liable to arrest or a civil action by reason of the entry.

*b.* For purposes of [this section](#), “land surveyor” means a land surveyor licensed pursuant to [chapter 542B](#) or a person under the direct supervision of a licensed land surveyor.

*c.* Vehicular access to perform surveys under [this section](#) is limited to established roads and trails, unless approval for other vehicular access is granted by the landowner.

2. A vehicle used for or during entry pursuant to [this section](#) shall be identified on the exterior by a legible sign listing the name, address, and telephone number of the land surveyor or the firm employing the land surveyor.

3. Land surveyors shall announce and identify themselves and their intentions before entering upon private property. A land surveyor shall provide written notice to the landowner, or the person who occupies the land as a tenant or lessee, not less than seven days prior to the entry. The notice shall be sent by ordinary mail, postmarked not less than seven days prior to the entry, or delivered personally. A mailing is deemed sufficient if the surveyor mails the required notice to the address of the landowner as contained in the property tax records. For civil liability purposes, receipt of this notice shall not be considered consent. This notice is not required for a survey along previously surveyed boundaries within a platted subdivision accepted or recorded by the federal government or an official plat as defined in [section 354.2, subsection 12](#).

4. The written notice of the pending survey shall contain all of the following:

*a.* The identity of the party for whom the survey is being performed and the purpose for which the survey will be performed.

*b.* The employer of the surveyor.

*c.* The identity of the surveyor.

*d.* The dates the land will be entered; the time, location, and timetable for such entry; the estimated completion date; and the estimated number of entries that will be required.

5. [This section](#) shall not be construed as giving authority to land surveyors to destroy, injure, or damage anything on the lands of another without the written permission of the landowner, and [this section](#) shall not be construed as removing civil liability for such destruction, injury, or damage.

6. A land surveyor who enters on private land must comply with all biosecurity and restricted-access protocols established by the owner or occupant of the private land.

7. A landowner or occupant shall owe the same duty to a land surveyor entering land

without the consent of the landowner or occupant as the landowner or occupant would owe to a trespasser on that land.

[2009 Acts, ch 157, §1](#)

#### **354.5 Descriptions and conveyance according to plat of survey or acquisition plat.**

1. A conveyance of a parcel shown on a recorded plat of survey shall describe the parcel by using the description provided on the plat of survey or by reference to the plat of survey, which reference shall include all of the following:

- a. The parcel letter or number designation.
- b. The document reference number of the recorded plat of survey.
- c. The lot number or letter and name of the official plat, if the parcel lies within an official plat.
- d. The section, township, and range number and reference to the aliquot part of the section, if the parcel lies outside of an official plat.

2. A conveyance of a parcel shown on a recorded acquisition plat shall describe the parcel by using the description provided on the acquisition instrument or by reference to the acquisition plat, which reference shall include all of the following:

- a. The parcel designation and reference to the project for which the right-of-way was acquired.
- b. The document reference number of the recorded acquisition plat.
- c. The lot number or letter and name of the official plat, if the parcel lies within an official plat.
- d. The section, township, and range number and reference to the aliquot part of the section, if the parcel lies outside of an official plat.

3. A description by reference to the recorded plat of survey, in compliance with [subsection 1](#), is valid.

4. A description by reference to the recorded acquisition plat, in compliance with [subsection 2](#), is valid.

5. A description by reference to a permanent real estate index number is valid for the purpose of assessment and taxation under the permanent real estate index number system pursuant to [section 441.29](#).

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §19](#)

C91, §409A.5

[91 Acts, ch 191, §16](#)

C93, §354.5

[2001 Acts, ch 44, §13, 14; 2005 Acts, ch 19, §48](#)

#### **354.6 Subdivision plats.**

1. A subdivision plat shall be made when a tract of land is subdivided by repeated divisions or simultaneous division into three or more parcels, any of which are described by metes and bounds description for which no plat of survey is recorded. A subdivision plat is not required when land is divided by conveyance to a governmental agency for public improvements.

2. A subdivision plat shall have a succinct name or title that is unique, as approved by the auditor, for the county in which the plat lies. The auditor shall evidence the approval of such name or title in a statement that shall accompany the plat as provided in [section 354.11](#). The plat shall include an accurate description of the land included in the subdivision and shall give reference to two section corners within the United States public land survey system in which the plat lies or, if the plat is a subdivision of any portion of an official plat, two established monuments within the official plat. Each lot within the plat shall be assigned a progressive number. Streets, alleys, parks, open areas, school property, other areas of public use, or areas within the plat that are set aside for future development shall be assigned a progressive letter and shall have the proposed use clearly designated. A strip of land shall not be reserved by the subdivider unless the land is of sufficient size and shape to be of practical use or service as determined by the governing body. Progressive block numbers or letters may be assigned to groups of lots separated from other lots by streets or other physical features of the land. The surveyor shall not assign lot numbers or letters to a lot shown within a subdivision

plat unless the lot has been surveyed by the surveyor in compliance with [chapter 355](#). The auditor may note a permanent real estate index number upon each lot within a subdivision plat. Sufficient information, including dimensions and angles or bearings, shall be shown on the plat to accurately establish the boundaries of each lot, street, and easement. Easements necessary for the orderly development of the land within the plat shall be shown and the purpose of the easement shall be clearly stated.

3. If a subdivision plat, described as part of the United States public land survey system and not entirely within an official plat, lies within more than one forty-acre aliquot part of a section, the acreage shall be shown only for assessment and taxation purposes for the portion of the subdivision that lies within each forty-acre aliquot part of the section. The area of the irregular lots within the plat shall be shown and may be expressed in either acres, to the nearest one-hundredth acre, or square feet, to the nearest ten square feet. The surveyor shall not be required to establish the location of a forty-acre aliquot line by survey but is required to use reasonable assumptions in determining its approximate location for assessment and taxation purposes.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §20](#)

C91, §409A.6

C93, §354.6

[2006 Acts, ch 1012, §1](#)

Referred to in [§354.3](#), [§354.8](#), [§354.11](#), [§354.13](#), [§354.16](#)

### **354.7 Conveyances by reference to official plat.**

A description of land by reference to lot number or letter designation and block, if block designations are shown on the plat, and the title or name of the official plat, is valid.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §21](#)

C91, §409A.7

C93, §354.7

### **354.8 Review and approval by governing bodies.**

1. A proposed subdivision plat lying within the jurisdiction of a governing body shall be submitted to that governing body for review and approval prior to recording. Governing bodies shall apply reasonable standards and conditions in accordance with applicable statutes and ordinances for the review and approval of subdivisions. The governing body, within sixty days of application for final approval of the subdivision plat, shall determine whether the subdivision conforms to its comprehensive plan and shall give consideration to the possible burden on public improvements and to a balance of interests between the proprietor, future purchasers, and the public interest in the subdivision when reviewing the proposed subdivision and when requiring the installation of public improvements in conjunction with approval of a subdivision. The governing body shall not issue final approval of a subdivision plat unless the subdivision plat conforms to [sections 354.6](#), [354.11](#), and [355.8](#).

2. If the subdivision plat and all matters related to final approval of the subdivision plat conform to the standards and conditions established by the governing body, and conform to [this chapter](#) and [chapter 355](#), the governing body, by resolution, shall approve the plat and certify the resolution which shall be recorded with the plat. The recorder shall refuse to accept a subdivision plat presented for recording without a resolution from each applicable governing body approving the subdivision plat or waiving the right to review.

3. As used in [this section](#), the term “*subdivision improvements*” means any fixture, structure, or other improvement to land required to be constructed or installed by the proprietor as a condition of the governing body’s approval of a subdivision plat.

4. *a.* For a city with a population equal to or greater than fifty thousand, if the proprietor or the contractor for the construction of subdivision improvements has provided the name and facsimile number or electronic mail address of the contractor, the city shall notify the contractor, either by facsimile or electronic mail, not less than forty-eight hours in advance of the date on which the city will consider the acceptance of subdivision improvements constructed by the contractor.

*b.* For a city with a population equal to or greater than twenty-five thousand but less



than fifty thousand, a proprietor or the contractor for the construction of subdivision improvements may request that the city notify the contractor, either by facsimile or electronic mail, not less than forty-eight hours in advance of the date on which the city will consider the acceptance of subdivision improvements constructed by the contractor. Upon the receipt of such a request to notify the contractor, the city shall provide such notice.

c. A city's failure to provide notice pursuant to paragraph "a" or "b" shall not impose any responsibility on the city for the payment of any amounts owed by a proprietor to a contractor.

5. A city may establish jurisdiction to review subdivisions or plats of survey outside its boundaries pursuant to the provisions of [section 354.9](#). In the case of a city, the provisions of [this section](#) apply to the review by the city of both subdivision plats and plats of survey.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §22](#)

C91, §409A.8

C93, §354.8

[2002 Acts, ch 1132, §1, 2, 11; 2011 Acts, ch 64, §1](#)

Referred to in [§354.11](#)

### **354.9 Review of plats within two miles of a city.**

1. If a city, which has adopted ordinances regulating the division of land, desires to review subdivision plats or plats of survey for divisions or subdivisions outside the city's boundaries, then the city shall establish by ordinance specifically referring to the authority of [this section](#), the area subject to the city's review and approval. The area of review may be identified by individual tracts, by describing the boundaries of the area, or by including all land within a certain distance of the city's boundaries, which shall not extend more than two miles distance from the city's boundaries. The ordinance establishing the area of review or modifying the area of review by a city, shall be recorded in the office of the recorder and filed with the county auditor.

2. If a subdivision lies in a county, which has adopted ordinances regulating the division of land, and also lies within the area of review established by a city pursuant to [this section](#), then the subdivision plat or plat of survey for the division or subdivision shall be submitted to both the city and county for approval. The standards and conditions applied by a city or county for review and approval of the subdivision shall be the same standards and conditions used for review and approval of subdivisions within the city limits or shall be the standards and conditions for review and approval established by agreement of the city and county pursuant to [chapter 28E](#). Either the city or county may, by resolution, waive its right to review the subdivision or waive the requirements of any of its standards or conditions for approval of subdivisions, and certify the resolution which shall be recorded with the plat.

3. If cities establish overlapping areas of review outside their boundaries, then the cities shall establish by agreement pursuant to [chapter 28E](#) reasonable standards and conditions for review of subdivisions within the overlapping area. If no agreement is recorded pursuant to [chapter 28E](#), then the city which is closest to the boundary of the subdivision shall have authority to review the subdivision.

4. For purposes of [this section](#), "subdivision" also includes a declaration for the establishment of a horizontal property regime under [chapter 499B](#). A declaration of a horizontal property regime that is proposed to be located within the area of review established by a city pursuant to this section shall be subject to review and approval in the same manner as a subdivision.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §23](#)

C91, §409A.9

C93, §354.9

[2002 Acts, ch 1132, §3, 11; 2010 Acts, ch 1051, §1; 2013 Acts, ch 30, §79](#)

Referred to in [§354.8, §499B.3](#)

### **354.10 Appeal of review or disapproval.**

1. When application is made to a governing body for approval of a subdivision plat, the applicant or a second governing body, which also has jurisdiction for review, may be aggrieved by any of the following:

- a. The requirements imposed by a governing body as a condition of approval.
- b. The governing body exceeding the time for review established by ordinance.
- c. The denial of the application.
- d. Failure of the governing body to approve or reject a subdivision plat within sixty days from the date of application for final approval.

2. If the plat is disapproved by the governing body, such disapproval shall state how the proposed plat is objectionable. The applicant has the right to appeal, within twenty days, the failure of the governing body to issue final approval of the plat as provided in [this section](#).

3. The applicant or the aggrieved governing body has the right to appeal to the district court within twenty days after the date of the denial of the application or the date of the receipt by the applicant of the requirements for approval of the subdivision. Notice of appeal shall be served on the governing body in the manner provided for the service of original notice pursuant to the rules of civil procedure. The appeal shall be tried de novo as an equitable proceeding and accorded a preference in assignment so as to assure its prompt disposition.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §24](#)

C91, §409A.10

C93, §354.10

[2010 Acts, ch 1061, §180](#)

#### **354.11 Attachments to subdivision plats.**

1. A subdivision plat, other than an auditor's plat, that is presented to the recorder for recording shall conform to [section 354.6](#) and shall not be accepted for recording unless accompanied by the following documents:

a. A statement by the proprietors and their spouses, if any, that the plat is prepared with their free consent and in accordance with their desire, signed and acknowledged before an officer authorized to take the acknowledgment of deeds. The statement by the proprietors may also include a dedication to the public of all lands within the plat that are designated for streets, alleys, parks, open areas, school property, or other public use, if the dedication is approved by the governing body.

b. A statement from the mortgage holders or lienholders, if any, that the plat is prepared with their free consent and in accordance with their desire, signed and acknowledged before an officer authorized to take the acknowledgment of deeds. An affidavit and bond as provided for in [section 354.12](#), may be recorded in lieu of the consent of the mortgage or lienholder. When a mortgage or lienholder consents to the subdivision, a release of mortgage or lien shall be recorded for any areas conveyed to the governing body or dedicated to the public.

c. An opinion by an attorney at law who has examined the abstract of title of the land being platted. The opinion shall state the names of the proprietors and holders of mortgages, liens, or other encumbrances on the land being platted and shall note the encumbrances, along with any bonds securing the encumbrances. Utility easements shall not be construed to be encumbrances for the purpose of [this section](#).

d. A certified resolution by each governing body as required by [section 354.8](#) either approving the subdivision or waiving the right to review.

e. A statement by the auditor approving the name or title of the subdivision plat.

f. A certificate of the treasurer that the land is free from certified taxes and certified special assessments or that the land is free from certified taxes and that the certified special assessments are secured by bond in compliance with [section 354.12](#).

2. A subdivision plat which includes no land set apart for streets, alleys, parks, open areas, school property, or public use other than utility easements, shall be accompanied by the documents listed in [subsection 1](#), paragraphs "a", "b", "c", "d", and "e" and a certificate of the treasurer that the land is free from certified taxes other than certified special assessments.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §25](#)

C91, §409A.11

C93, §354.11

[2006 Acts, ch 1012, §2, 3; 2010 Acts, ch 1061, §143](#)

Referred to in [§354.6](#), [§354.8](#), [§354.16](#), [§354.25](#)



**354.12 Bonds to secure liens.**

1. A bond in double the amount of the lien shall be secured and recorded if a lien exists on the land included in a subdivision plat and the required consent of the lienholder is not attached for one of the following reasons:

a. The lienholder cannot be found, in which case an affidavit by the proprietor stating that the lienholder could not be found shall be recorded with the bond.

b. The lienholder will not accept payment or cannot, because of the nature of the lien, accept payment in full of the lien, in which case an affidavit by the lienholder stating that payment of the lien was offered but refused shall be recorded with the bond.

2. The bond shall run to the county and be for the benefit of purchasers of lots within the plat and shall be conditioned for the payment and cancellation of the debt as soon as practicable and to hold harmless purchasers or their assigns and the governing body from the lien.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §26](#)

C91, §409A.12

C93, §354.12

[2010 Acts, ch 1061, §180](#)

Referred to in [§354.11](#)

**354.13 Auditor's plats and plats of survey.**

If a tract is divided or subdivided in violation of [section 354.4](#) or [354.6](#) or the descriptions of one or more parcels within a tract are not sufficiently certain and accurate for the purpose of assessment and taxation under the guidelines of [section 354.3](#), the auditor shall notify the proprietors of the parcels within the tract for which no plat has been recorded as required by [this chapter](#), and demand that a plat of survey or a subdivision plat be recorded as required by [this chapter](#). Notice shall be served by mail and a certified copy of the notice shall be recorded. The auditor shall mail a copy of the notice to the applicable governing bodies. If the proprietors fail, within thirty days of the notice, to comply with the notice or file with the auditor a statement of intent to comply, the auditor shall contract with a surveyor to have a survey made of the property and have a plat of survey or an auditor's plat recorded as necessary to comply with [this chapter](#). Upon receipt of a statement of intent to comply, the auditor may extend the time period for compliance.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §27](#)

C91, §409A.13

C93, §354.13

Referred to in [§306.42](#), [§331.511](#), [§354.3](#), [§354.15](#), [§354.16](#), [§354.17](#)

**354.14 Appeal of notice.**

A proprietor aggrieved by a notice to plat by the auditor may appeal to the district court within twenty days after service of notice. Upon appeal, the auditor shall take no further action pending a decision of the district court. The appeal shall be tried de novo as an equitable proceeding.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §28](#)

C91, §409A.14

C93, §354.14

**354.15 Review of auditor's plats.**

A proposed auditor's plat shall be filed with the applicable governing body which shall review the plat within the time specified by ordinance, and if it conforms to [chapter 355](#), the governing body shall by resolution approve the plat and certify the resolution to be recorded with the plat. The governing body may state in the resolution whether the lots within the auditor's plat meet the standards and conditions established by ordinance for subdivision lots. The lots within a recorded auditor's plat and parcels within a recorded plat of survey prepared under [section 354.13](#) are individually subject to local regulations and ordinances. Approval of an auditor's plat shall not impose any liability on a governing body to install or

maintain public improvements or utilities within the plat. Approval of an auditor's plat by a governing body shall not constitute a waiver of ordinances requiring a subdivision plat.

90 Acts, ch 1236, §29

C91, §409A.15

C93, §354.15

Referred to in §306.42

#### **354.16 Attachments to auditor's plats and plats of survey.**

1. A plat of survey prepared pursuant to [section 354.13](#) shall be accompanied by a certificate of the auditor that the plat of survey was prepared at the direction of the auditor because the proprietors failed to file a plat.

2. An auditor's plat shall conform to [section 354.6](#), but is exempt from [section 354.11](#). An auditor's plat presented to the recorder for recording shall be accompanied by the following documents:

a. A certificate of the auditor that the auditor's plat was prepared at the direction of the auditor because the proprietors failed to file a plat, that the plat was prepared for assessment and taxation purposes, and that the recording of the plat does not constitute a dedication or impose any liability upon the state or governmental agency.

b. A certified resolution by the governing body, approving the plat or waiving the right to review.

c. A list for each lot within the plat of the proprietor's names, the area, expressed in acreage or square feet, the document reference number of the recorded conveyance to the proprietors, and the permanent real estate index number, where established.

d. A certificate of the auditor that no search was made at the time of the recording of the plat to determine the existence of any liens, mortgages, delinquent taxes, or special assessments, that no search was made, other than the records of the auditor's office, to establish title to the property within the plat, and that the lots within the plat are subject individually to the regulations and ordinances of the applicable governing body.

90 Acts, ch 1236, §30

C91, §409A.16

C93, §354.16

2002 Acts, ch 1113, §6

#### **354.17 Costs and collection of costs.**

The surveyor shall present to the auditor a statement of the total cost of the surveying, platting, and recording of a plat prepared pursuant to [section 354.13](#). The surveyor shall also present a statement of the part of the total cost to be assessed to each parcel included in the plat based on the time involved in establishing the boundaries of each parcel. The auditor shall certify to the treasurer an assessment for the platting costs against the lots within the plat which shall be collected in the same manner as general taxes, except that the board of supervisors, by resolution, may establish not more than ten equal annual installments and provide for interest on unpaid installments at a rate not to exceed that permitted by [chapter 74A](#).

90 Acts, ch 1236, §31

C91, §409A.17

C93, §354.17

Referred to in §354.25

Collection of taxes, see chapter 445

#### **354.18 Recording of plats.**

A plat of survey prepared pursuant to [this chapter](#) and a subdivision plat, with attachments, shall be recorded in the office of the county recorder, and an exact copy of the plat shall be filed in the offices of the county auditor and assessor. A replat of any part of an official plat pursuant to [section 354.25](#), or a recorded subdivision plat of any part of an existing official plat shall supersede that part of the original official plat, including unused public utility easements.

The recorder shall examine each plat of survey and subdivision plat to determine whether

the plat is clearly legible and whether the approval by the applicable governing body and the other attachments required by [this chapter](#) are presented with the plat. The recorder shall also keep a reproducible copy of the plat from which legible copies can be made. The recorder may specify the material and the size of the plat, not less than eight and one-half inches by eleven inches, that will be accepted for recording in order to comply with [this section](#). The recorder shall not record a subdivision plat that violates [this chapter](#).

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §32](#)

C91, §409A.18

C93, §354.18

Referred to in [§331.511](#)

#### **354.19 Dedication of land.**

An official plat which conforms to [this chapter](#) and has attached to the plat a dedication by the proprietors to the public and approval of the dedication by the governing body is equivalent to a deed in fee simple from the proprietors to the public of any land within the plat that is dedicated for street, alley, walkway, park, open area, school property, or other public use. An approved dedication of land for street purposes by the proprietors establishes an easement for public access, whether or not a deed has been recorded or the improvement of the street is complete, except when the resolution approving the plat specifically sets aside portions of the dedicated land as not being open for public access at the time of recording for public safety reasons. The recording of a subdivision plat shall dedicate to the public any utility, sewer, drainage, access, walkway, or other public easement shown on the plat.

The recording of an auditor's plat shall not serve to dedicate streets, alleys, parks, open areas, school property, public improvements, or utilities. The failure to show the existence of an easement or any public interest on the auditor's plat shall not remove or otherwise affect the interest.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §33](#)

C91, §409A.19

C93, §354.19

#### **354.20 Action to annul plats.**

If a plat is filed and recorded in violation of [this chapter](#), a governing body or a proprietor aggrieved by the violation, after filing written notice with the proprietors who joined in the acknowledgment of the plat or their successors in interest, may institute a suit in equity in the district court. The court may order the plat annulled except as provided in [section 354.21](#).

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §34](#)

C91, §409A.20

C93, §354.20

#### **354.21 Limitation of actions on official plats.**

An action shall not be maintained, at law or in equity, in any court, against a proprietor, based upon an omission of data shown on an official plat or upon an omission, error, or inconsistency in any of the documents required by [this chapter](#) unless the action is commenced within ten years after the date of recording of the official plat. Limitation of actions based on claims other than those provided for in [this section](#) shall be consistent with [chapter 614](#).

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §35](#)

C91, §409A.21

C93, §354.21

Referred to in [§354.20](#)

#### **354.22 Vacation of official plats.**

1. The proprietors of lots within an official plat who wish to vacate any portion of the official plat shall file a petition for vacation with the governing body which would have jurisdiction to approve the plat at the time the petition is filed. After the petition has been filed, the governing body shall fix the time and place for public hearing on the petition. Written notice of the proposed vacation shall be served in the manner of original notices as

provided in Iowa rules of civil procedure and be served upon proprietors and mortgagees within the official plat that are within three hundred feet of the area to be vacated. If a portion of the official plat adjoins a river or state-owned lake, the Iowa department of natural resources shall be served written notice of the proposed vacation. Notice of the proposed vacation shall be published twice, with fourteen days between publications, stating the date, time, and place of the hearing.

2. The official plat or portion of the official plat shall be vacated upon recording of all of the following documents:

a. An instrument signed, executed, and acknowledged by all the proprietors and mortgagees within the area of the official plat to be vacated, declaring the plat to be vacated. The instrument shall state the existing lot description for each proprietor along with an accurate description to be used to describe the land after the lots are vacated.

b. A resolution by the governing body approving the vacation and providing for the conveyance of those areas included in the vacation which were previously set aside or dedicated for public use.

c. A certificate of the auditor that the vacated part of the plat can be adequately described for assessment and taxation purposes without reference to the vacated lots.

3. No part of [this section](#) authorizes the closing or obstructing of public highways.

4. The vacation of a portion of an official plat shall not remove or otherwise affect a recorded restrictive covenant, protective covenant, building restriction, or use restriction. Recorded restrictions on the use of property within an official plat shall be modified or revoked by recording a consent to the modification or removal, signed and acknowledged by the proprietors and mortgagees within the official plat.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §36](#)

C91, §409A.22

[92 Acts, ch 1055, §1](#)

C93, §354.22

[2010 Acts, ch 1061, §180](#)

Referred to in [§354.23](#)

### **354.23 Vacation of streets or other public lands.**

A city or a county may vacate part of an official plat that had been conveyed to the city or county or dedicated to the public which is deemed by the governing body to be of no benefit to the public.

The city or county shall vacate by resolution following a public hearing or by ordinance and the vacating instrument shall be recorded. The city or county may convey the vacated property by deed or may convey the property to adjoining proprietors through the vacation instrument. If the vacating instrument is used to convey property then the instrument shall include a list of adjoining proprietors to whom the vacated property is being conveyed along with the corresponding description of each parcel being conveyed. A recorded vacation instrument which conforms to [this section](#) is equivalent to a deed of conveyance and the instrument shall be filed and indexed as a conveyance by the recorder and auditor.

A vacation instrument recorded pursuant to [this section](#) shall not operate to annul any part of an official plat except as provided for in [section 354.22](#).

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §37](#)

C91, §409A.23

C93, §354.23

### **354.24 Errors on recorded plats.**

If an error or omission in the data shown on a recorded plat is detected by subsequent examinations or revealed by retracing the lines shown on the plat, the original surveyor or two surveyors confirming the error through independent surveys shall record an affidavit confirming that the error or omission was made. The affidavit shall describe the nature and extent of the error or omission and also describe the corrections or additions to be made to the plat and note a document reference number of the recorded plat. The recorder shall note on the record of the plat the word “corrected”, and note the document reference number of the

recorded affidavit. A copy of the recorded affidavit shall be filed with the auditor and assessor. The affidavit shall raise a presumption from the date of recording that the purported facts stated in the affidavit are true, and after the lapse of three years from the date of recording the presumption shall be conclusive.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §38](#)

C91, §409A.24

C93, §354.24

[2001 Acts, ch 44, §15](#)

Referred to in [§331.511](#)

#### **354.25 Survey and replat of official plats.**

1. A survey of an official plat shall conform as nearly as possible to the original lot lines shown on the official plat. The surveyor may summon witnesses, administer oaths, and prepare affidavits and boundary line agreements as necessary in order to establish the location of property lines or lot lines. If a substantial error is discovered in an official plat or if it is found to be materially defective, a proprietor may petition the governing body which would have jurisdiction to approve the plat at the time the petition is filed for a replat of any part of the official plat. Notice of the proposed replat shall be served, in the manner of original notice as provided in Iowa rules of civil procedure, to the proprietors of record and holders of easements specifically recorded within the area to be replatted. The governing body has jurisdiction of the matter upon proof of publication of notice of the petition once each week for two weeks in a newspaper of general circulation within the area of the replat.

2. All of the following shall apply to a replat of an official plat ordered by the governing body:

a. The replat shall be prepared by a surveyor pursuant to [chapter 355](#) and recorded.

b. The replat shall be exempt from the provisions of [section 354.11](#).

c. The replat shall have attached to the plat a statement by the surveyor that the replat is prepared at the direction of the governing body.

3. The costs of the replat shall be presented to the auditor and assessed against the property included in the replat as provided for in [section 354.17](#).

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §39](#)

C91, §409A.25

C93, §354.25

[2010 Acts, ch 1069, §121](#)

Referred to in [§331.511](#), [§354.18](#)

Manner of service, R.C.P. 1.302 – 1.315

#### **354.26 Corrections or changes to plats.**

A vacation, correction, or replatting as provided for in [this chapter](#) shall be recorded and an exact copy shall be filed with the auditor and assessor. If a governing body changes the addresses or street names shown on an official plat, notice of the change shall note the name or other designation of each official plat affected and shall be filed with the recorder, auditor, and assessor. The recorder shall note the vacation, correction, or replatting on the index and record of the official plat or upon an attachment to the official plat for that purpose. The auditor shall make the proper changes on the plats required to be kept by the auditor.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §40](#)

C91, §409A.26

C93, §354.26

[2001 Acts, ch 44, §16](#)

Referred to in [§331.511](#), [§592.7](#)

#### **354.27 Noting the permanent real estate index number.**

When a permanent real estate index number system is established by a county pursuant to [section 441.29](#), the auditor shall note the permanent real estate index number on every conveyance.

[90 Acts, ch 1236, §41](#)

C91, §409A.27

C93, §354.27

[2005 Acts, ch 19, §49](#)